

U.S.—Mexico Border Program

March 2013

1st Quarter Report

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Upcoming Events:

March 20-21, 2013:
Binational Water Con-
ference (Laredo, TX)

March 23, 2013: Chil-
dren's Env. Health Pro-
gram Indoor Air Train-
ing (McAllen, TX)

April 3-4, 2013: Border
Tire Management
Workshop (San Anto-
nio, Texas)

June 2013 (Tentative) -
Regional Workgroup
Chairs Meeting for 3-
state and 4-state (San
Antonio, TX)

Overview: Border 2020 Program

The Border 2020 Program is the latest environmental program implemented under the 1983 La Paz Agreement. It builds on the Border 2012 Environmental Program, emphasizing regional, bottom-up approaches for decision making, priority setting, and project implementation to address the environmental and public health problems in the border region. As in Border 2012, the new Program encourages meaningful participation from communities and local stakeholders.

The Border 2020 Program also strengthens its focus in regional areas where environmental improvements are needed most: establishing five thematic goals, supporting the implementation of projects, considering six new fundamental strategies, and encouraging the achievement of more ambitious environmental and public health goals.

In addition, the program has recently finalized the 2-Year Action Plans for the Policy Forums and Regional Workgroups. These plans will assist with accounting for resources and priority changes, as well as, consider the particular needs of a community or geographic area.



Kickoff of the Border 2020 Program in Tijuana, Baja California (August 2012).

Border 2020 Program information is published at: www.epa.gov/usmexicoborder

Region 6 Border Team Staff Changes

- **Gina Weber** (Region 6 Border Coordinator): Has expanded her duties by taking over coordinating the Texas-Coahuila-Nuevo Leon-Tamaulipas Regional Workgroup (4-State RWG).
- **Renee Bellew**: In late 2012, took over as Region 6 Lead for Border Waste Issues, and will be serving as Region 6 Lead on the Border 2020 Waste Policy Forum. This role was previously served by Robbie Snowbarger.
- **Jose Rodriguez**: Accepted a new position in the Municipal Drinking Water Section. Jose previously was assisting with managing the BEIF Projects.
- **Paula Flores**: Accepted a new position in the Office of Environmental Justice and Tribal Affairs to serve as the Community Liason for New Mexico and U.S.-Mexico Border. Paula was previously serving as coordinator for 4-State

Texas/New Mexico/Chihuahua Regional Workgroup Update

Background: The Texas-New Mexico-Chihuahua Region stretches approximately 500 miles (800 km) along the international boundary from the Coronado National Forest to Big Bend National Park and includes the following major sister cities: Columbus-Palomas, Las Cruces-El Paso-Ciudad Juárez, and Presidio-Ojinaga. This region is a part of the Chihuahua Desert ecosystem that primarily comprises of arid to semi-arid biotic communities and is home to the second largest metropolitan area along the U.S.-Mexico Border known as the Paso del Norte region. The Paso del Norte region defined by the area made up of two countries, three states and three major cities with a population of more than two million residents, share the same limited environmental resources.

The US EPA Region 6 El Paso Border Office staff, together with program partners, help coordinate the TX/NM/CHIH RWG activities and reports to ensure transparency and timely access to environmental information. The multiple Task Forces within the Regional Workgroup are the foundation of the RWG that encourage local decision-making, priority-setting and project implementation to solve the border region's environmental problems.



View of City of El Paso Skyline

Contact (Texas-New Mexico-Chihuahua Regional Workgroup Coordinator): Debra Tellez (tellez.debra@epa.gov) , (915) 533-7273

Recent Items:

- November 5-9, 2012, approximately 35 Emergency Responders from City of Ojinaga, Aduanas and Civil Protection received HazMat Training as part of EPA-NORTHCOM agreement. City of Ojinaga received HazMat Equipment.
- The Regional Workgroup finalized the 2-year Action Plan in December 2012 for the Border 2020 Program. The final plan is available on the Border 2020 Web Page.
- There are eight (8) Border Funded Projects to be completed by FY13, early FY14 totaling \$395,823. Please see table on page 5 for complete list of projects.
- Currently there are 3 U.S. Co-leader vacancies for the Taskforces: Health; NM-CHIH Rural; and Education.
- The Water Quality Division, Partnership and Communications Team, provided \$5,000 to San Elizario Independent School District in 2012. The project provided seed money for the school district to create the first community garden in El Paso County. The project was in direct support of EPA Administrator's priorities of government empowering communities by building capacity and providing environmental awareness. A fact-sheet on this project can be downloaded from: www2.epa.gov/border2020/region-6-publications
- The Region 6 Environmental Justice Office awarded the following grants in December 2012:
 1. Ben Archer Health Center (Hatch, NM): "Breathe Easy" - The Breathe Easy project will provide pesticide training to farmworkers and their families. Through home-based, personalized health education, the project's goal is to minimize exposure of pesticides, allergens and asthma triggers in Luna County.
 2. Familias Triunfadoras, Inc. (San Elizario, Texas): "Familias Saludables Project: - The project focuses on communities lacking wastewater utilities and residents living in poor housing conditions constructed from salvaged materials. The project will train and educate residents about various environmental hazards, linking residents to governmental resources to aid in the reporting of illegal dumping and other threats to public health.

Texas/Coahuila/Nuevo Leon/Tamaulipas Regional Workgroup

Background: The Texas/Coahuila/Nuevo León /Tamaulipas Regional Workgroup (often called the "Four-State Regional Workgroup") The Four State Regional Workgroup is the most complex of the four regional workgroups, because of its geographical expanse and the number of municipalities. The region includes part of three states and a total of at least 29 municipios on the Mexican side, and 168 cities and towns on the U.S. side. Recognizing this, the workgroup divided itself into three geographically based Task Forces, each of which has established subject-specific committees related to its priority concerns. **Contact (Texas-Coahuila-Nuevo Leon-Tamaulipas Regional Workgroup Coordinator):** Gina Weber (658-665-6787); weber.gina@epa.gov

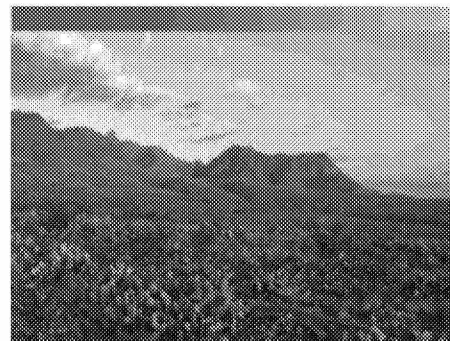
Recent Items:

- Gina Weber is the new RWG Coordinator. Through an agreement with TCEQ, TCEQ Staff, Victor Wong and Claudia Lozano, support the EPA RWG coordinator.
- The Regional Workgroup finalized the 2-year Action Plan in December 2012 for the Border 2020 Program. The final plan is available on the Border 2020 Web Page.
- There are thirteen (13) Border Funded Projects to be completed by FY13, early FY14 totaling \$635,891. Please see table on page 5 for complete list of projects.
- November 26-30, 2012, approximately 30-35 Emergency Responders from Rio Bravo, Tamaulipas received HazMat Training as part of EPA-NORTHCOM agreement. City of Rio Bravo received HazMat Equipment.
- EPA Region 6 Water Division, conducted 4 workshops with water and wastewater utilities along the U.S. Mexico border, particularly in the McAllen Texas area, focused on energy management. These workshops were conducted on June 12, 2012; July 24, 2012; December 6, 2012 and February 21, 2013. Cities attending the workshops were the Agua Speciality Utility District, Brownsville, Edinburg, Laredo, McAllen, Pharr and Weslaco.
- EPA Region 6 provided a grant to the Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center (TMAC) at the University of Texas at Arlington and The University of Texas Pan American to conduct energy assessments. TMAC staff and three engineering students from UT Pan American conducted assessments at the drinking water Booster Station in Edinburg and the North Wastewater Plant in McAllen, Texas. These reports included findings and recommendations for future energy management considerations. Future energy management meetings are planned in the McAllen Area. Utility staff's encouraged to share their experiences in implementing an energy management plan and ways to reduce energy usage and energy costs.
- The EPA Region 6, Children's Environmental Health Program, is sponsoring a training in McAllen, TX entitled Healthy School Environments for South Texas in partnership with McAllen Independent School District and Texas A&M University System Health Science Center School of Rural Public Health. Training will focus on implementing proactive indoor environmental quality management actions to protect student and staff health. **The training is set for March 23, 2013 in McAllen, Texas.**
- The 6WQ-NC (Partnerships and Communications Team of Water Quality Division) has been assisting the RWG. The group provided comments to the RWG's 2-year Action Plan and provided the proposed water outreach projects for the Border communities. The following proposed projects were incorporated into the final Border 2020 - Two Year Action Plan:
 - 1) Coordinate a regional best practice workshop by Spring 2013, Binational Water Conservation Conference, incorporating WaterSense Program, Fix a Leak Week and partnership opportunities. **This Conference is set to take place March 20-21, 2013 in Laredo, Texas.**
 - 2) Promote energy management practices among water and waste water utilities from Laredo to Brownsville;
 - 3) Promote the use of educational webinars among the various outreach efforts using Adobe Connect;
 - 4) Develop and produce region specific supplemental materials for a Waters to the Sea-Rio Grande module; and;
 - 5) Provide Teacher Training Workshop(s) and/or onsite facilitators to implement educational water quality monitoring events.

Borderwide Update

Communications:

- The final Border-wide strategy on communication has been completed and is on the Border 2020 website: www.epa.gov/usmexicoborder.
- The Border 2020 Program's listserv with over 8,000 subscribers was discontinued in October due to budget constraints. EPA Region 6 and 9, along with the Office of International and Tribal and Affairs, have been researching and evaluating options for continuing communication with listserv members through a different service provider. We anticipate that a listserv will be restored in the next couple of months.
- **New Look to Border website:** With the start of the Border 2020 Program, the Border Program page received a revamped look from its previous Border 2012 Program webpage. In addition, EPA is migrating to a new Web-based management system, Drupal. Through this new system, Border staff from Region 6, Region 9 and OITA will now be able to directly update the Border 2020 Program Website versus having Region 9 Border Web Team be the main website editors. This will allow Regional Staff to update information in a more efficient and timely manner.



Update on Mexican Staff Changes

With the July 2012, Mexican National Elections, there were several changes in staff within our Mexican Partner's Organizations. To-date, March 2013, the new Delegates designated as counterparts to EPA are as follows:

SEMARNAT Secretary: Lic. Juan Jose Guerra Abud

SEMARNAT Chihuahua Delegate: Lic. Brenda Rios (Brenda.rios@semarnat.gob.mx);

SEMARNAT Coahuila Delegate: Lic. Raul Fernando Tamez Robledo
(raul.tamez@coahuila.semarnat.gob.mx)

SEMARNAT Nuevo Leon Delegate: Ing. Guillermo Cueva Sada (guillermo.cueva@nl.semarnat.gob.mx)

SEMARNAT Tamaulipas Delegate: Lic. Jesús González Macías (jesus.glzma@tamaulipas.semarnat.gob.mx)

PROFEPA, Attorney General: Lic. Francisco Moreno Merino

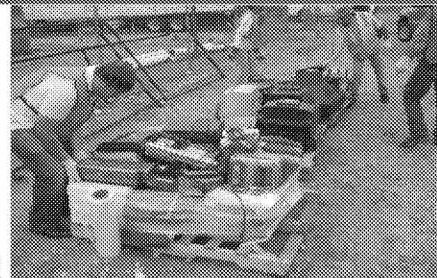
PROFEPA, Chihuahua: Lic. Joel Arranda Olivas

CONAGUA, General Director: Dr. David Korenfeld Federman (david.korenfeld@conagua.gob.mx)

Partner Highlights

A factsheet on these events can be downloaded from:
www2.epa.gov/border2020/region-6-publications

1. September 8 and 15, 2012, two collection events in Westway, Texas and Fabens, Texas resulted in over over 64 tons of municipal solid waste, 3.4 tons of E-Waste, 1095 gallons of household hazardous waste and 816 scrap tires collected.
2. On September 28-29, Ciudad Juarez held second annual E-Waste or Used Electronics Collection Event. Approximately 118 tons of E-Waste was collected, far exceeding the original goal of 50 tons.



Westway Clean-Up September 8, 2015.

Ongoing Border Projects

Texas/New Mexico/Chihuahua Region:

Water:

1. Border Partners *"Water Conservation Project in Pto. Palomas, Chihuahua, MX"*
2. New Mexico State University *"Examination of Risk to Groundwater from On-Site Wastewater Management System"*
3. Autonomous University of Ciudad Juarez *"Microbiological and Chemical Risks that impact the Environmental and Human Health in the Valley of Juarez, Chihuahua."*

Air:

1. New Mexico Department of Health *"Binational Air Quality Study within Northwestern Chihuahua, and Dona Ana County and West Texas"*

Waste:

1. REMEXMAR *"Regional Solid Waste Management Plan for Ascension y Janos, Chihuahua"*
2. City of Ojinaga, Chihuahua *"Clean Up Tire Program in Ojinaga, Chihuahua"*

Emergency Response:

1. Rio Grande Council of Governments *"US/MX Sister City Plan Update Presidio, Texas-Ojinaga, Chihuahua"*

Multi-media:

1. New Mexico Environment Department *"Fostering Binational Environmental Sustainability in the NM/CHIH Border Region"*

Texas/Coahuila/Nuevo Leon/Tamaulipas Region:

Water:

1. City of Laredo Utilities Department *"Cease the Grease-South TX FOG Abatement Workshop"*
2. Municipality in Reynosa, Dept. Ecology *"Building Capacity Program on oil and grease reduction from Wastewater discharges in Reynosa, Tamaulipas."*

Air:

1. City of Nuevo Laredo *"Programa del Centro de Investigación y Educación Ambiental."*
2. SEMARNAT *"Design of a strategy to reduce particles as part of the Clean Transportation Program"*

Waste:

1. Monterrey Tech University *"Existing and Future Market Assessment for recycled rubber from scrap tires"*
2. Municipality of Nuevo Laredo *"Clean-up Tire Program in Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas"*
3. Texas A&M University-Kingsville *"Waste Tire Reuse Technology for Heavy Duty Road Bed Construction Application at City Landfill Brownsville, Texas"*
4. Municipality of Reynosa *"Electronic Waste Management and Handling in Reynosa, Tamaulipas"*
5. Nuevo Leon State Government *"Fortalecimiento de capacidad regional de 4 estados fronterizos en el manejo de llantas desechas."*

Ongoing Border Projects (continued)

Texas/Coahuila/Nuevo Leon/Tamaulipas Region:

Health:

1. Texas A&M Health Science Center School of Rural Public Health *"Development of an Environmental/Epidemiological Database in Texas-Mexico Border."*
2. City of Laredo Health Department *"Children's Environmental Health Initiative Laredo, Texas"*
3. University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio-STEER Program *"Reducing Prenatal and Childhood Environmental Exposure Risks among Hispanic Families in South Texas and North Tamaulipas."*
4. Migrants in Action (MIA) Weslaco, Texas *"Pesticide Awareness message in South Texas"*

Emergency Response:

1. Rio Grande Institute *"U.S. Mexico Sister Cities Updating Emergency Response and Preparedness Plans for: Eagle Pass-Maverick County/Piedras Negras and Del Rio/Val Verde County/Cuidad Acuna"*

Education:

1. Texas A&M Kingsville *"LRGV NPS Pollution Awareness-Sign Development and Installation Program."*

Energy:

1. Piedras Negras Water Utilities *"Energy Efficient Project at Piedras Negras Water Utility"*

The anticipated date of completion for these projects is FY 13, early FY 14.

Regional Project Highlights: "Students go Beyond Translation To Raise Awareness About Pesticides"

Health disparities along the U.S.-Mexico Border (up to 45% of children are medically indigent) and other socio-economic conditions make children more vulnerable to household hazardous materials, pesticides, chemical residues and air toxins. The inappropriate storage, use and disposal of these items increase the risk of exposure to children and their families. The United Independent School District-Migrant Education Program, together with Migrants in Action, The City of Laredo Health Department, and the U.S.-Mexico Border 2020 Program, created a collaborative effort to increase awareness on the hazards at home and/or while working in the fields.

On October 18, the team hosted a theater performance of "El Moscas" y Los Pesticidas to more than 800 attendees, at the Bill Johnson Activity Complex Auditorium, in Laredo, TX. Children who work in the fields took a leadership role in enhancing the script, acting, and promoting the event. Thanks to their efforts, local television stations picked up their PSAs and Mayor Raul Salinas signed a proclamation naming the day of the performances "Household Hazardous Material and Pesticide Awareness Day".



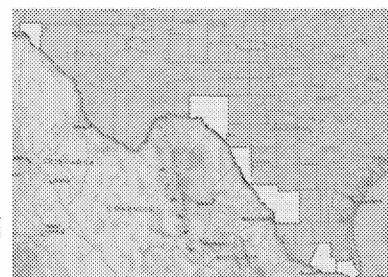
Audience at the Bill Johnson Student Activity Complex Auditorium (October 18, 2012)

Toxics Release Inventory for Border Region: New Mexico and Texas 2009-2011 Data Release

In January 2013, Region 6 released the latest data for the Border Region for the States of New Mexico and Texas. TRI is a database containing data on disposal or other releases of over 650 toxic chemicals from thousands of U.S. facilities and information about how facilities manage those chemicals through recycling, energy recovery, and treatment. One of TRI's primary purposes is to inform communities about toxic chemical releases to the environment.



In Texas, total releases for border counties (El Paso, Val Verde, Webb, Hidalgo, Maverick and Cameron) accounted for 0.6% of total releases for the state of Texas for 2009, 0.5% for 2010, and approximately 1.1 % for 2011. In New Mexico, total releases for border counties, Dona Ana and Grant, accounted for 23% of total releases for the state of New Mexico for 2009, 20 % for 2010, and approximately 22 % for 2011. Other border counties in Texas and New Mexico did not report TRI releases. The report also lists the top chemicals released and top facilities releasing reportable chemicals along the U.S.-Mexico Border in these two states.



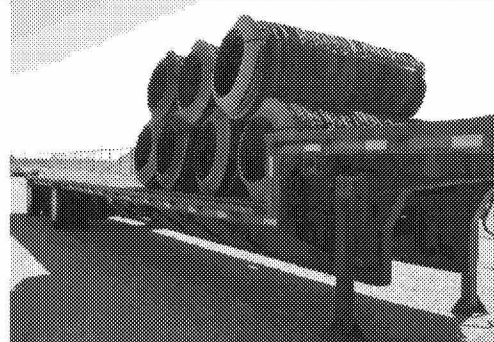
Factsheets for both New Mexico and Texas can be downloaded from: www2.epa.gov/border2020/region-6-publications.

For national information on data releases: <http://www.epa.gov/tri>

Contact: Maria Sisneros (sisneros.maria@epa.gov); (915) 533-7273

Tire Flow Study in the Texas-Mexico Border Region

The U.S.-Mexico border has a significant number of scrap tire piles. Although millions of scrap tires have been properly disposed, further work is being done under the Border 2020 Program. Tires pose several health risks such as tire piles can catch on fire, and liquid waste can accumulate making them ideal vectors of disease. The health risks are especially of concern because of the proximity of tire piles to communities. The study was performed in order to assess the current situation, to help identify and evaluate feasible and sustainable alternatives for dealing with waste tires accumulating in Mexico.



To address this problem, the U.S. and Mexico officials have collaborated through programs such as the Border 2012, now Border 2020 Environmental Program. This binational program aims to protect public health and the environment in the U.S.-Mexico border region within 100-kilometer on each side of the border. One of the program's key goals is for the two countries to reduce land contamination along their shared border, including tire piles. The Border 2012 program has helped communities on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border analyze environmental problems, such as waste tires, and evaluate potential solutions.

The primary purpose of this study was to conduct a used and waste tire flow study in the Texas-Mexico Border Region. The study assessed in a comprehensive manner the current situation of scrap tires in the Texas-Mexico Border Region and suggests actions to address and attenuate the problem. Through an EPA grant to the North American Development Bank (NADB), NADB contracted Integrated Environmental Management Services

Tire Flow Study in the Texas-Mexico Border Region (Continued)

(IEMS) to perform a study to better understand the nature and logistics of how and where used and waste tires are being transported and stored along the Texas-Mexico Border Region.

IEMS developed a methodology to obtain and report information on the number of used and waste tires that have been transported between Texas and Mexico from 2005 to date. Data was also collected about locations of existing tire piles and estimates of the number of the tires that are being sold, reused, and disposed of in the Texas-Mexico Border Region. Another component of this study addresses the economic and environmental aspects of tire flow into the Texas-Mexico Border Region. The economic considerations include the costs to transport the tires, revenue from the sale of the tires, costs of disposal of the tires, costs to remediate disposal sites, and the costs resulting from possible waste tire pile fires.



The Border 2020 Program is looking into regional and binational solutions to scrap tires. This means that not one solution will work for the entire border. Most of the border scrap tires are currently being used in larger projects such as embankment, landfills, and energy production. The study can be found at: www2.epa.gov/border2020/region-6-publications

Region 6 Water and Wastewater Project news: Funding of Last Resort in Laredo and Webb County, Texas

The U.S.-Mexico Border Water Infrastructure Program supplemented funding provided by the Texas Water Development Board and Webb County to provide first-time drinking water and wastewater collection and treatment to 3,725 residents living in 15 colonias. The comprehensive water and wastewater project for colonias in Laredo and Webb county exemplifies the challenges associated with providing these basic services to underserved border communities.

The project consisted of several phases, including the expansion of water distribution and wastewater collection systems. The final phase provided a 0.125 million gallons/day (MGD) wastewater treatment plant to service 4 of the 5 Mines Road Planning Area colonias. This comprehensive project was completed in September 2012, with the construction of additional water and wastewater hookups in two colonias. From a total project cost of close to \$21.6 million, the U.S.-Mexico Border Program contributed approximately \$7.9 million.



Region 6 Borderwide News:

- Texas-Mexico Border Region Tire Flow Study completed October 2012. Final Report on Border 2020 website.
- Border Tire Management Workshop: April 3-4, 2013 in San Antonio, Texas
- Joint Regional Workgroup meeting is set to take place in FY13 in San Antonio, Texas. Date: TBD
- Region 6 will tentatively be conducting another Request for Proposals in FY13

Special Note: The Region 6 Border Team would like to recognize the work of Dr. John Haynes, who passed away December 2012. Dr. Haynes served as the Border 2012 Health Taskforce U.S. Co-leader for the Texas-New Mexico-Chihuahua Regional Workgroup during 2002-2012. Dr. Haynes proudly served our country in the Marine Corps and Army. He served in both Vietnam and Desert Storm. He was a Medical Doctor Specializing in emergency medicine and toxicology at Texas Tech University Medical Center and the West Texas Regional Poison Center.